

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 15595

DEPT PASS USDA/FAS/CA/NOVOTNY/ESCS/POPE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, UR
SUBJECT: WINTER GRAIN TEAM SURVEY RESULTS

1. CONTENTS OF THIS CABLE MUST NOT REPEAT NOT BE
REVEALED IN PART OR IN WHOLE UNTIL AFTER USDA TASK
FORCE REPORT OF SOVIET GRAIN OUTPUT IS RELEASED DURING
WEEK STARTING JULY 10. SUBJECT TEAM COMPLETED ITS WORK
AND DEPARTED USSR JULY 5. FINDINGS OF THE TEAM,
INCLUDING CONCLUDING DISCUSSIONS WITH MINAG OFFICIALS
ARE SET FORTH BELOW.

2. TEAM'S WINTER WHEAT YIELD ESTIMATES BY AREA WITH
PREVIOUS YEAR'S COMPARISONS (CENTNERS/HECTARE):

-	-	-	HIGHEST	
-	-	-	IN 1971-75	
-	TEAM ESTIMATE	AVERAGE	PERIOD	1977

VOLGOGRAD	20	10.6	15.7 (1973)	12.2
VORONEZH	25	21.2	27.0 (1973)	28.6
ROSTOV	26	20.6	28.2 (1973)	22.4

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DONETSK	30	27.9	36.5 (1974)	32.0
CHERKASSY	39	37.0	40.2 (1973)	39.8
KRASNODAR	31	30.6	37.1 (1971)	36.0
KIEV	--	31.2	33.5 (1973)	32.0

3. WINTER WHEAT AREA (MILLION HECTARES):

- TEAM ESTIMATE 1971-75 AVERAGE 1977

KIEV	--	-	961	--
CHERKASSY	1115	-	914	1672
DONETSK	1278	-	798	1430
ROSTOV	4797	-	2631	3804
KRASNODAR	4030	-	44978	5400
VORONEZH	1730 1/	-	833	1275 1/
VOLGOGRAD	2500 1/	-	1808	1765 1/

1/ FIGURES APPEAR OUT OF LINE. TEAM WILL CLARIFY.

4. OTHER TEAM FINDINGS:

- A. SOIL MOISTURES WERE ON THE WHOLE ADEQUATE IN ALL AREAS VISITED TO FINISH WINTER GRAINS WITHOUT SERIOUS YIELD LOSSES. THIS INCLUDED VORONEZH WHICH WAS THE DRIEST AREA TRAVELLED. GROUND CRACKS OF UP TO ONE-FOURTH INCH WIDE AT SURFACE WERE NOTED.
- B. WINTER GRAINS IN VORONEZH WERE FURTHEST BEHIND. THEY WERE IN LATE FLOWERING TO EARLY MILK STAGE.
- C. TEAM SAW VERY LITTLE SPRING GRAIN. LITTLE WINTER BARLEY WAS OBSERVED BUT YIELDS ARE THOUGHT TO BE GOOD.
- D. EXCEPT FOR VORONEZH, HEAVY HARVEST OF WINTER WHEAT SHOULD BE IN FULL SWING IN TEN DAYS UNLESS HEAVY RAINS COMMENCE.
- E. NO SERIOUS DISEASE PROBLEMS WERE OBSERVED.

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5. ZHOLOBOV, CHIEF OF MAIN ADMINISTRATION FOR CEREAL PRODUCTION, ATTENDED FINAL SESSION AT MINAG. HE INDICATED FOLLOWING:

- A. WINTER GRAIN CONDITIONS ARE CONSIDERED GOOD BY MINISTRY. WHEN ASKED IF WINTER CROP MIGHT APPROACH NEW RECORD LEVEL, HE CONCURRED.
- B. HARVESTED AREA OF WINTER GRAINS IS EXPECTED TO BE SLIGHTLY ABOVE 3 MILLION HECTARES. HE SAID "30 MILLION WITH A TAIL" WHICH HE CLARIFIED TO MEAN 31 PLUS BUT WE WERE NOT CERTAIN OF THIS.
- C. GENERAL RAINS FELL IN EASTERN UKRAINE AND NORTH CAUCASUS DURING THE WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JULY 2. (AGATT TRAVEL CONFIRMED THIS FACT).
- D. MINAG KNOWS OF NO SERIOUS DISEASE PROBLEMS IN WINTER OR SPRING GRAINS TO DATE.
- E. RAINS IN MAY. JUNE WAS DRY AS USUAL, UNTIL LATE IN MONTH, BUT HE REPORTED RAINS THERE LATE IN MONTH.
- F. ZHOLOBOV CONCURRED THAT CORN CROP PROSPECTS THIS YEAR ARE BELOW AVERAGE UNLESS WEATHER DURING REMAINDER OF GROWING SEASON IS EXCELLENT.

G. MINAG OFFICIALS AGREED THAT OUTLOOK FOR SUNFLOWERS AND SUGAR BEETS IS ALSO NOT GOOD DUE LATENESS OF CROP, WEEDS AND DISEASE (MOSAIC) IN SUNFLOWERS.

6. TEAM WAS APPRISED OF CONTENTS OF FASTO 132 ON DEBRIEFINGS AND WILL CONCUR.

7. COMMENT: CROPS CAN ALWAYS BE LOST, BUT BASIS TEAM'S FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF AGATT OFFICE, WINTER GRAIN SITUATION LOOKS GOOD AGAIN THIS YEAR. SOIL MOISTURES, WHICH ARE GENERALLY VERY GOOD, SHOULD SUPPORT WINTER GRAIN GROWTH THROUGH MATURITY AND SUSTAIN SPRING GRAIN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH JULY 15-20 UNLESS SUKONEY (DRY HOT WINDS) OR HEAT WAVE SHOULD OCCUR. ONLY POSSIBLE THREAT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 15595

TO WINTER GRAINS NOW ARE HAIL, HEAVY RAIN OR BAD HARVEST WEATHER. LATTER SITUATION, HOWEVER, IN 1976 AND 1977 DID NOT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE BUNKER WEIGHTS. WINTER GRAIN QUALITY LOOKS GOOD AND YIELDS, IF CROP CAN BE HARVESTED, ACCORDING TO TEAM WILL BE WELL ABOVE 1971-75 AVERAGE, BUT NOT A RECORD. HOWEVER, INCREASED AREA OF WINTER WHEAT MAY MEAN RECORD PRODUCTION OF THIS GRAIN. THE OPTIMISM OF ZHOLOBOV (AND MINISTER MESYATS AT JULY 4 RECEPTION) ABOUT CURRENT GRAIN CROP CONDITION IS IN

SHARP CONTRAST WITH 1975-77. AT SUCH PREVIOUS MEETINGS
ATTENDED BY AGATT, MINAG OFFICIALS WERE AT BEST
CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC.

8. RECAP OF TRICK/ZAHN TRAVEL WILL BE SUBMITTED NOT
LATER THAN EARLY 7/6 AFTER COMPLETION OF CABLES ON
AGRICULTURAL PLENUM OF CPSU. TOON

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